

**REMARKS**

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of certified copies of the priority documents submitted on October 25, 2000.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the references cited with the Information Disclosure Statements filed October 25, 2000 and May 21, 2002.

**Status of the Application**

Claims 1-28, 30 and 31 are all the claims pending in the Application, as claim 31 is newly added to more fully define the current invention and claim 29 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-30 have been rejected. Claim 1 has been amended.

**Indefiniteness Rejection of Claims 1-30 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph**

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-30 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The amendments to claims 15-19 and 30 and the cancellation of claim 29 are believed to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner.

Regarding the rejection as to the scope and meaning of "pseudo-land portion," Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended, is believed to define these portions so as to enable one of ordinary skill to more clearly understand the scope of claim 1.

Thus, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

**Prior Art Rejections of Independent Claim 1**

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being alternatively anticipated by JP 09-002024A (“JP ‘024”), JP 03-86605 (“JP ‘605”), JP 11-263103 (“JP ‘103”), EP 0867310 A2 (“EP ‘310”), WO 95/18022 (“WO ‘022”), US 6,112,788 (“US ‘788”), or US 5,658,404 (“US ‘404”). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has taken the position that all of the features of claim 1 are disclosed by each of the applied references. In particular, the Examiner has taken the position that the recited “pseudo-land portions” are variously disclosed by: the portion of rib 1 (see FIGS. 2 and 3) that slants downwards away from the centerline of the tire in JP ‘024; fins 4 (see FIGS. 1-4) in JP ‘605; projections 22 (see FIG. 2) in JP ‘103; corner portions 71, 72, 81 and 91 (see FIG. 1) in EP ‘310; wave form surface 11a (see FIG. 1) in WO ‘022; small ribs 10 (see FIGS. 2 and 3) in US ‘788; and sides 73, 74 (see FIG. 8) in US ‘404.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the above references teach or suggest all of the features of amended claim 1. Specifically, Claim 1 recites that a “pseudo-land portion” is formed in a circumferential groove which promotes a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into the opening of a slant groove. Further, claim 1 recites that the “opening position of [the] slant groove is located on a side of the circumferential groove opposite to [the] pseudo-land portion formed on another side of [the] circumferential groove.”

Regarding JP ‘024, Applicants respectfully submit that this reference fails to teach or suggest the basic configuration recited in claim 1, as it does not disclose any circumferential groove “extending along a circumferential direction of the tire,” as recited in claim 1. Further,

Applicant respectfully submits that because of the lack of any disclosure of a “circumferential groove,” JP ‘024 is also incapable of disclosing any feature such as the claimed “pseudo-land portion” that could be located in such a “circumferential groove.”

Regarding JP ‘605, Applicant respectfully submits that, although the cited fins 4 of this reference are arranged in a circumferential groove, they are arranged opposite to each other rather than being formed opposite to the opening position of a slant groove, as recited in claim 1. Further, fins 4 are not provided to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into the opening of a slant groove, as recited in claim 1. Rather, fins 4 are provided to eject water “ahead of the tyre” (*see* abstract).

Regarding JP ‘103, Applicant respectfully submits that projections 22 are not formed in any circumferential grooves, nor are formed opposite to an opening position of a slant groove. Rather, as clearly shown in at least FIG. 3 of JP ‘103, projections 22 are formed outside of main groove 14 and on the same side of groove 14 as lug groove 16.

Regarding EP ‘310, Applicant respectfully submits that corner portions 71, 72, 81 and 91 of EP ‘310 are not formed in circumferential grooves 1 or 2, nor are these features formed opposite to the opening position of slant grooves 4, 5 or 6. Rather, corner portions 71, 72, 81 and 91 are merely shaped areas of tread blocks 7, 8 and 9 that form the walls of the grooves themselves. Thus, as these corner portions define the shape of the walls of the grooves themselves, they cannot also be in grooves 4, 5 or 6.

Regarding WO ‘022 and US ‘788, Applicant respectfully submits that there can be no teaching or suggestion that wave form surface 11a or small ribs 10 could be arranged so as to be

opposite to any opening position of any slant groove. Rather, these features are only disclosed on the bottom surface of a groove.

Regarding US '404, Applicant respectfully submits that this reference fails to teach or suggest the basic structure of the tire recited in claim 1, as it fails to disclose any "slant grooves ... each opening to the circumferential groove and obliquely extending from such an opening position toward a ground contact end of a tread." Further, as US '404 fails to disclose such a "slant groove," it cannot teach or suggest any feature arranged opposite to such a slant groove, *i.e.*, there can be no teaching or suggestion that sides 73, 74 are arranged opposite to any opening positions of any slant grooves.

Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw each of the above rejections.

**Prior Art Rejection of Dependent Claims 2-30**

The Examiner has variously rejected dependent claims 2-30 as being anticipated by the above references, or under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over a combination of one of those references in view of a further reference, such as US 6,138,728 to Miyazaki, EP 325,905 A2 to Arendt or JP 05-319,025.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-30 are allowable, *at least* by virtue of their dependency from claim 1. The secondary references clearly fail to supply the deficiencies of the primary references. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

**New Claim 31**

New claim 31 corresponds to original claim 4 rewritten in independent form. Original Claim 4 stands rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being alternatively anticipated by JP 09-002024A (“JP ‘024”), JP 03-86605 (“JP ‘605”), JP 11-263103 (“JP ‘103”), EP 0 867 310 A2 (“EP ‘310”), WO 95/18022 (“WO ‘022”) or US 6,112,788 (“US ‘788”).

However, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the above references teach or suggest all of the features recited in claim 31. Specifically, Claim 1 recites that a “pseudo-land portion” is formed in a circumferential groove which promotes a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into the opening of a slant groove. Further, claim 1 specifies that the “pseudo-land portion” is arranged to a first groove wall of the circumferential groove not opened to the slant groove.

Regarding JP ‘024, Applicants respectfully submit that this reference fails to teach or suggest any “circumferential groove,” for at least the reasons discussed above.

Regarding JP ‘605, Applicants respectfully submit that fins 4 are not provided to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into the opening of a slant groove, for at least the reasons discussed above.

Regarding JP ‘103 and EP ‘310, Applicant respectfully submits that neither projections 22 nor corner portions 71, 72, 81 and 91 are formed in any circumferential grooves, for at least the reasons discussed above.

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Regarding WO '022 and US '788, Applicant respectfully submits that there can be no teaching or suggestion that wave form surface 11a or small ribs 10 could be arranged so as to be opposite to any opening position of any slant groove, for at least the reasons discussed above.

Thus, as none of the applied references teach or suggest all of the features of new claim 31, Applicants respectfully submit that this claim is immediately allowable.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-28, 30 and 31 are allowable. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the application now is in condition for allowance with all of the claims 1-28, 30 and 31.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees which may be required to maintain the pendency of this application, except for the Issue Fee, to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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**APPENDIX**  
**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Claim 29 is cancelled.**

**The claims are amended as follows:**

1. (Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising:  
  
a tread portion provided with at least one circumferential groove extending along a circumferential direction of the tire;  
  
[and] a plurality of slant grooves each opening to the circumferential groove and obliquely extending from such an opening position toward a ground contact end of a tread[,]; and  
  
[characterized in that] a pseudo-land [portion(s) is] portion formed in the circumferential groove so as to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing [in] from the circumferential groove into the slant groove,  
  
wherein said opening position of said slant groove is located on a side of the circumferential groove opposite to said pseudo-land portion formed on another side of said circumferential groove.

15. (Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein when [the] a basic side and [the] an oblique side are projected into the ground contact face of the tire, the slant surface is isosceles triangular wherein their length are substantially equal to each other and an angle ( $\alpha$ ) therebetween is within a range of not more than 20°.



16. (Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein a position of an intersecting point between [the] a basic side and [the] an oblique side is arranged at a lowest side of the slant surface viewing the tire from a front face.

17. (Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein a shape of [the] an oblique side of the slant surface projected onto the ground contact face of the tire is a curved lone in which a center of curvature is located outward in a widthwise direction of the tire.

18. (Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein [the] a basic side of the slant surface is substantially the same height position as a maximum height position of [the] a first groove wall.

19. (Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein [the] a basic side of the slant surface is located inward from the maximum height position of [the] a first groove wall in the radial direction of the tire.

30. (Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein all of the slant grooves each opening to each of [the] a pair of circumferential grooves and extending toward the respective ground contact end of the tread are arranged in a direction of successively entering in

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the ground contact face from the side of the circumferential groove toward the side of the ground contact end to thereby form a directional pattern in the tread portion.

**Claim 31 is added as a new claim.**